

AmigaOS4 On Tour from AmigaWorld.net

July 29, 2003

For the 21st of June there was an "AmigaOS4 on Tour" event planned for Basel. I travelled from Holland to Switzerland to write a report for AmigaWorld.net regarding this event and planned to combine this with a short holiday in this beautiful Swiss city and surrounding environment. Following are my general experiences with regard to the trip and followed by a full report of the "AmigaOS4 on Tour" event.

Wednesday I was able to arrange some days off at work and as my wife had to work in Italy for two weeks and knowing about the AmigaOS4 event planned for Basel on Saturday, I decided to spend some days in Switzerland. Just after treating my last Physical Therapy patient for the day and calling my wife to inform her about my intentions, I went to the railway station and booked a ticket for Basel, with the train leaving already one and half hour later! I hurried home on my bicycle, packed some cloths together with some of the most necessary stuff, reading my latest emails and then quickly returned back to the railway station by bus. The trip by train would take 12 hours, but luckily I got myself a ticket for a sleeping cabin and the time passed rather quickly while eating at the train restaurant, having some fun conversations with fellow American, German and Dutch tourists at the bar and simply sleeping most of the time. Early in the morning the steward woke me up to tell me we were about to arrive in Basel already!

The first thing I had to do was to find a hotel and this wasn't as easy as I expected due to a big art fair taking place in Basel as well. First I tried to get a room at the Hotel Bildungszentrum, where the AmigaOS4 presentation would take place, but they were already fully booked... Eventually I ended up in a five star hotel near the railway station, the Hotel Euler. The next two days I had a great time in Basel, visiting interesting museums, wandering through the hills/mountains near Basel. And the city has a great lively night-life with loads of good restaurants, nightclubs and music bands performing live in the streets. But lets now forward to Saturday's AmigaOS4 presentation! :)

The AmigaOS4 presentation:

Arriving at the show around twelve oclock I was one of twenty people who were there for the presenta-

tion. A short while later many more people arrived and the room got pretty crowded. Jürgen Schober of point.design did various presentations in German and several other presentations and Q&A sessions were translated into French by a member of the French Amiga club "Annuaire Amiga Francophone." Two AmigaOne-XE based systems running Linux were present for users to "test drive." One of these was equipped with an 800 MHz G4 processor and the other one was using a 933 Mhz G3 processor. Furthermore there were two A4000 systems present, equipped with 604e 233 Mhz Cyberstorm PPC accelerators for people to test AmigaOS4 for themselves.

First, AmigaOS running on a classic A4000 using a 50 MHz 68060 CPU and a Voodoo3 graphics card was demonstrated while being enhanced with AmigaOS4 68k modules. The source code of these modules were rewritten and cleaned up to be untied from the classic Amiga hardware and to be easily re-compiled into PPC native code. The various 68k AmigaOS4 components operated much faster than I had expected by running merely on a 50 MHz 060 CPU and it was truly a delight to see applications including SnoopDOS and Directory Opus4 using the much more modern looking user interface with color gradients, new gadgets and buttons. A 68k version of the mandel demo was used to demonstrate the ability of 3rd party program interactions with AmiDock, as is managed by the new application library. The demo program registered itself with the system and then was able to run inside AmiDock which is AmigaOS4's default application launcher. Similarly AmiDock's functionality can be endlessly extended by 3rd party programs called "dockies." For instance status/resource programs could be used (interactively and realtime) inside AmiDock. Within the dock a clock was showing the time in realtime and the icons of other "dockies," including one which functions as a magnifying-glass, were simply dropped into AmiDock to be opened inside AmiDock itself and with the icon of another program already displayed inside the dock, allowed Jürgen to easily switch between different applications and windows. The reason why the PPC native version of the mandel demo couldn't yet be used for demonstrating the interaction functionality was because the new application library itself was still running in 68k mode. The PPC native version of the mandel demo was written on Linux using a C gcc-crosscompiler (a C/C++ AmigaOS4 application development kit was said to be planned for both Linux and AmigaOS4 itself, for the near future). To demonstrate the PPC native mandel demo the system was rebooted using the new PPC native ExecSG kernel in combination with the Cyberstorm PPC hardware. Other AmigaOS4 modules were interpreted by an integrated 68k emulator. Every 68k module or program needed to be interpreted because AmigaOS's new default JIT enabled 68k emulator Petunia was

not yet integrated into the OS. As can be expected with a near fully interpreted OS environment together with interpreted 68k applications, the general user experience was not fast and actually slower than running on the 060. However the PPC native mandel demo ran very well and many times faster than the previously demonstrated 68k version. Similarly the whole environment will be a lot faster when running in PPC native mode and when Petunia is fully integrated. Also classic 68k emulated Amiga programs are expected to run (several times on AmigaOnes) faster than with an original 68060 processor.

Within two weeks it is expected that AmigaOS4's rewritten and enhanced intuition system library (which handles the windowing system), will be presented in PPC native mode at the "AmigaOS4 on Tour" events planned for Italy and France. After this, other higher level PPC native modules will be integrated into the OS

with relative ease, with expectations of being able to integrate one module a day and thus having a finished AmigaOS4 Cyberstorm release before the end of the summer period! With regard to the AmigaOne platform it was already demonstrated many months ago that ExecSG was ported to this hardware. However before AmigaOS4 will be presented running on the AmigaOne some more work will be needed, especially with regard to the timer.device and drivers implementation. Reported was that the porting of the SNAP display driver solution to the AmigaOne hardware was recently completed and that the first AmigaOS4/AmigaOne demonstrations are expected for October, with the consumer release before the end of the year.

Other default abilities demonstrated included the ability to turn on or off the dragging of windows outside of the screen. And when enabled holding the "right shift" would move the active window back into the screen and temporarily disabled the off screen window dragging. Holding CTRL and ALT keys

AmigaMCCC News

MCCC

P.O. Box 813

Bedford, Texas 76095

Please Forward

Address Correction Requested

<http://www.amigamccc.org>

September Calendar

September 8 — Amiga By-The-Loop Chapter

7:30 pm — University Center, Pedernales Room
W. First St. & S. West St., Arlington

September 8 — MCCC Board of Director's Meeting

Approx. 10:00 pm — TGI Fridays
Cooper Street just south of I-20, Arlington

September 18 — Amiga North Dallas Chapter

7:30 pm — Junkins Building, SMU
Dyer and Airline Extension Rd., Dallas

September 27 — Newsletter Deadline — 7:00 am

simultaneously would allow to immediately scale the active window's size horizontally and vertically with the mouse and by holding the CTRL and Amiga keys simultaneously allows the active window to be moved around with the mouse, without the need of having to use the ordinary title bar dragging method. Jürgen also demonstrated how you could change the used colors/gradients for buttons/title bars/etc, use alternative textures and gadgets. He demonstrated that when an application suffered a software fault this would not per se crash the whole system and instead several options were presented, like being able to kill the application or start a debugger. And he also showed how with a new screens preference utility the user can easily predefine the used screenmodes for different applications and much more.

I hope I got all the little details right (and likewise does Jürgen!) and most of all I hope that you enjoyed reading this "AmigaOS4 on Tour" report as much as I enjoyed writing/compiling it. — MikeB